



**State of Connecticut**  
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**Affairs Commission**

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Testimony for

Elena Trueworthy, Vice Chairwoman  
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission Budget

Appropriations Committee, March 5, 2015  
Hartford, CT

Good Evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee – my name is Elena Trueworthy, Vice Chairwoman of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. I am here today to speak in support of all the Legislative Commissions and, particularly, on behalf of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission's budget.

We appreciate the fact that Governor Malloy has kept the Commission's budget at current levels. We, however, wish to point out that the Commission has experienced significant rescissions within the past several years including cuts we sustained during the great recession which total 53% that when combined with the potential biennium cutbacks totaling more than \$40,000, not to mention additional potential exposure in the current year.

We are aware that the Appropriations Committee is reviewing all cutbacks in key areas of the state budget, and as such, want to recognize the growing needs of the Latino population in a number of highly specialized areas that require more, not less, attention from our lawmakers:

- 1. The resources and structure of bilingual education within our educational system along with the need for an asset-based approach to support English Language Learners and their families**
- 2. Issues of racial profiling which affected Latinos in East Haven, and through current data collection and analysis, the identification of this issue as a wide spread problem throughout many systems**
- 3. Severe segregation impacting our state's housing stock**

It is in this context that we commend our state elected officials for being good stewards of our budgetary resources and we look forward to finding innovative ways to increase revenue and trim the budget without cutting back on services for the most vulnerable populations.

An area where the state may be able to gain added revenues is within the state's ECS formula in funding public schools throughout Connecticut. This focus would allow the capture of at least \$21 million in revenues which are currently over-funding some municipalities in the State. LPRAC staff has the details as to where this is occurring and can share this information with the committee.

LPRAC's work informs the Legislature and Governor of the needs and strengths of one of CT's steadily growing populations-the Hispanic population. Examples of past and current work of the LPRAC include:

- Supporting recent legislation to assist the community in obtaining drivers only licenses for undocumented Hispanic residents.
- Being at the forefront of a complaint filed against the East Haven Police Department for profiling the Hispanic community in their town and working with the Federal Department of Justice to ensure that the incidents were investigated and changes occurred within the Department to benefit the community overall.
- Assisting the DREAMERS in realizing their goal of attaining higher education.
- Hosting turn the curve sessions to identify barriers to Hispanic small businesses obtaining state contracts.
- Working to find a legislative solution to the lack of affordable housing in areas that would open access to better employment opportunities for our community and for a more fair access to quality schools and a better education for Hispanic children as a result.
- Identifying, through our RBA work that the ELL formula as it is currently implemented within CT school systems, is ineffective for children trying to learn the English language without enough time to test and succeed with a passing grade. The LPRAC is working jointly with legislative and community partners to pass a law that would allow for more time for them to garner proficiency in the language prior to testing their subject knowledge.

These are but a few of the many issues that the LPRAC is working on in partnership with and on behalf of our constituents-the Hispanic community. Connecticut's Hispanic population is one of the youngest with an average age of 28, and is Connecticut's future workforce. Our work is vital to ensuring that the Hispanic community thrives by recommending and aligning policy that supports the education, health, economic success, and quality of life of the thousands of Hispanics that live, work, and study in Connecticut.